

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, November 4, 2011

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Attachment to this field memo:

TCS Guidance Memo 11-4-11

Action Item Calendar

November 14: At-home instructed, June graduating class, noncertified staff reports due
November 15: Deadline for final selections of district teachers of the year
December 1: Districts verify all personnel assignments
December 1: For TCS, Districts should clarify model to determine "contributing educators"
December 9: Textbook reimbursement forms due
June 30, 2012: Schools and districts submit final personnel assignments

Notes from Commissioner Gist:

1. Rhode Island makes significant gains on NAEP

We all had a very proud moment this week, as the National Center for Education Statistics released the 2011 NAEP results, showing that Rhode Island students made significant gains in mathematics and reading and have met or surpassed the national average on all four assessments. As I've share with you and have reinforced in interviews, these gains – which mark continued improvement on the NAEP assessments since 2007! - are the result of the hard work of our school leaders, our teachers, and our students over many years.

Here is an excerpt from the news release we issued Tuesday on the 2011 NAEP results:

For the first time in the history of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), sometimes called "The Nation's Report Card," Rhode Island students scored at or above the national average on all four mathematics and reading tests.

Results that the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released today (November 1, 2011) show that Rhode Island students in grade 4 scored above the national average in both mathematics and reading. Rhode Island students in grade 8 scored at the national average in mathematics and above the national average in reading.

Rhode Island was one of only 3 states (plus the District of Columbia) to improve in both grade-4 and grade-8 mathematics, and Rhode Island is the *only* state (plus the District of Columbia) to improve in both mathematics assessments on the previous (2009) and the current Report Card.

This year, 34 percent of Rhode Island 8th-graders were proficient in mathematics, an increase of 6 percentage points. In grade 4, 43 percent of Rhode Island students were proficient in mathematics this year, an increase of 4 percentage points.

Reading results released today show that 35 percent of Rhode Island 4th-graders were proficient, a drop of 1 percentage point – but still higher than the national average. In grade-8 reading, 33 percent of Rhode Island students were proficient, an increase of 5 percentage points.

Among the 52 states and jurisdictions, Rhode Island ranked 23rd in grade-4 mathematics, 21st in grade-4 reading, and 30th in grade 8 (in both mathematics and reading). Each ranking is an improvement over the 2009 results.

The release included this tribute from Governor Chafee:

This is great news for our state, and it shows that our schools are moving in the right direction and advancing student achievement across the board. I congratulate all of our

students, teachers, and administrators who have made all Rhode Islanders proud of their achievement.

Though the NAEP results also shows that we still have significant achievement gaps, Rhode Islanders should be proud of the progress our students have made in mathematics and reading over the past four years. These results show that we are on the right path toward transforming education and advancing student achievement. Congratulations to our school leaders, our teachers, and our students on these excellent results!

We have posted more information on the NAEP results on our Web site, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/naep.aspx>

2. Education Secretary Duncan offers praise for Rhode Island

We were really excited that Education Secretary Arne Duncan visited Rhode Island on Wednesday to address the annual RIPEC dinner and for a Town Hall Forum at the Providence Career & Technical Academy. It was great to see a large group of educators, community members, and students fill the auditorium. We truly showed the Secretary that Rhode Islanders care deeply about education and that we are committed to transforming our schools.

The Secretary fielded many challenging questions. He agreed that “the student voice has to be heard” as we move forward with transformation. He also endorsed a call for more partnerships between our schools and community social-service organizations. Most of all, he had a lot of praise for the work we are doing in Rhode Island.

As part of his remarks, he said:

You’re doing a tremendous job through Race to the Top. You guys earned the money because we believe you can help lead the country where we need to go.

Rhode Island’s size is a huge plus. You can innovate and very quickly try things that larger states can’t get to.

You have a chance to get better faster than anyone else. There’s no reason in my mind why that shouldn’t happen. You guys have taken huge steps in the right direction. This is going to take tenacity, a sense of commitment going forward that is absolutely relentless.

We have an opportunity to break through once and for all, and you guys are going to help lead the country.

It was very heartening to hear these words of support from Secretary Duncan and to know that he and his colleagues in Washington have great hopes and high expectations for the work we are doing in Rhode Island. I know that we will all do our very best to ensure that we lead the country when it comes to transforming education and preparing all students for success.

3. District Teachers of the Year honored at RIPEC dinner

I am very pleased that RIPEC invited all of our 2012 District Teachers of the Year to the annual RIPEC dinner to hear Secretary Duncan speak on trends and issues in public education. It was a great moment when the 2012 Teachers of the Year, plus some previous Rhode Island Teachers of the Year who have devoted their time to the selection process, were asked to stand for a round of applause. The support from the large crowd of business, labor, and political leaders showed once again that Rhode Island recognizes teacher excellence, that we support public education, and that we expect our schools to continue to accelerate toward greatness. The Teacher of the Year Program is a great way to honor the work of our educators, and I hope that you will select a District Teacher of the Year so as to share in this important recognition program. To date, 23 LEAs have selected a Teacher of the Year. The streamlined application for District Teachers of the Year is available here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/Recognition/default.aspx>

4. Regents adopt new certification regulations

As you may have heard, the Board of Regents last night approved revised regulations on educator certification that will link certification with evaluations. These new regulations mark a major step forward in our work toward ensuring that we have excellent teachers in every classroom and excellent leaders in every school. By basing certification on objective measures of educator effectiveness, we will be better able to support teachers and school leaders as they strive toward continuous improvement throughout their careers. We will post the new regulations as soon as possible, and I will provide you with additional information about these regulations in next week's field memo. Here is a link to the news release we issued last night on the new regulations:

Regents Approve Regulations Linking Teacher Certification to Evaluations
[- 11/3/2011](#)

Here is a link to a final draft version of the regulations:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Regents/Docs/RegentsRegulations/CertificationRegulationsPublicHearing_9.13.11.pdf

From RIDE:

5. Comprehensive Assessment System webinar scheduled for Wednesday

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

On **Wednesday** (November 9), from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m., RIDE will host a webinar on how to use the Assessment Maps in the Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) Criteria & Guidance. These tools are designed to help LEAs take stock of their local assessment systems in order to identify gaps and overlaps, identify possible sources of evidence for Student Learning Objectives, and comply with the requirements of the BEP. The webinar

will also introduce a CAS self-assessment tool, which can help LEAs identify priority areas and next steps. To register, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/CAS.aspx>

6. Districts must apply for reimbursements for nonpublic-school textbooks by December 9

Please see this notice from our Office of Multiple Pathways:

Under the procedures for reimbursements for textbooks provided to students in nonpublic schools, districts will be reimbursed for only English-language arts and history or social studies books for grades K - 12 appearing on the approved 2011 Textbook List. To receive reimbursements, you must comply with all requests from nonpublic-school students (RIGL 16-23-1 to 16-23-8). For RIDE to process your reimbursement, you must complete the [verification form](#) signed by you or your designee. You also must provide "evidence of cost" (RIGL 16-23-3-1). Evidence of cost is presumed to be clear documentation of district purchases of new books for nonpublic-school students. Please also provide a summary page that demonstrates how the number of textbooks and the total cost on the verification form were calculated (see sample attached to the verification form).

The verification form must be submitted by Friday, **December 9**. You must return the information to RIDE by mail or fax. The form and supporting documentation should be sent to:

Rosemary Burns
Office of Multiple Pathways
R.I. Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, R.I. 02903
Fax: 222-4979

A single Fiscal Year 2012 payment will be made in your February 2012 aid payment.

Questions regarding reimbursements should be addressed to Kristen Cole, at 222-4681.

7. Sustainable Schools Summit scheduled for November 16

Please see this notice from our Office of Statewide Efficiencies:

RIDE, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Sustainable Schools Network, Rhode Island College, and the Apeiron Institute, extends an invitation to educators, students, principals, facilities managers, parents, and other education stakeholders to attend the Rhode Island Sustainable Schools Summit, on Wednesday, November 16, from 1 – 6 p.m., at the Nathan Bishop Middle School, 101 Sessions St., Providence 02906. The summit will showcase successful local initiatives and provide participants with the knowledge, resources, and support network to move their schools toward greater

sustainability in their facilities and their curriculum. RIDE will also announce that Rhode Island will participate in the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Program, and we will provide guidance for interested schools and a timeline for participation.

Please visit the Apeiron Institute's [Web site](#) to register for this event.

8. Superintendents asked to review, forward memo on Teacher-Course-Student link and to register for webinar – *Action Item*

Please see this notice from our Office of Data, Analysis, and Research:

Please find attached the memo regarding the Teacher-Course-Student (TCS) link. This document reviews important dates and deadlines in the TCS data-collection process as well as actions that the LEAs must take in this process. Please be sure to forward this important document to all pertinent stakeholders. The success of the educator-evaluation process, the Instructional Management System, and the Educator Performance and Support System depends on the proper planning and implementation of the Teacher-Course-Student link.

Based on our conversations during Data Team meetings regarding the importance of clearly communicating this information to all those responsible for this important work, we have scheduled a webinar for Tuesday, November 22, from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. Please register at:

<https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/708855870>.

All superintendents are asked to attend this webinar, but assistant superintendents, principals, technology directors, and data managers are also invited to attend.

To make the best use of everyone's busy schedule, an overview of the Enterprise Data System will also take place during this webinar. This overview will allow everyone to better understand the scope and scale of the system as well as the roles and responsibilities of all involved.

In addition, as a result of feedback from Data Team members and other stakeholders, RIDE is exploring options to provide additional resources to districts over the next several weeks to support TCS data-entry efforts. More information will be forthcoming.

9. Module 3 sessions for teacher evaluators in progress; Make-up sessions for Building Administrator Evaluators scheduled

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Module 3 for Personnel Evaluating Teachers is underway and will run through December 8. The training is focused on conducting classroom observations, delivering feedback, analyzing non-observable evidence, and preparing for Mid-Year Conferences. The sessions are filling up fast, so register by going to the eRIDE Workshop calendar, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>.

Make-up trainings sessions for both Module 1 and Module 2 for Building Administrator Evaluators have been scheduled for November 16 (location TBD). Module 1 will take place from 8:30 -11:30 a.m. and Module 2 will take place from 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. Building Administrator Evaluators can register by going to the eRIDE Workshop calendar at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>.

10. RIDE offers call-in and drop-in sessions on educator evaluations

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

In order to provide educators with additional opportunities to receive answers to their questions about the Rhode Island Model for educator evaluation, RIDE has scheduled multiple call-in and drop-in sessions. Interested participants will need to register for the call-in sessions to obtain the conference call number, but you do not need to register for the drop-in sessions.

Call-in Session 1: **Tuesday** (November 8), 4 -5 p.m. In order to register for the call and to receive further directions, go to:

<https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/248730870>.

Drop-in Session 1: Wednesday, November 16, 8 – 10 a.m., at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative (Room 104), 640 George Washington Highway, Lincoln 02865.

Drop-in Session 2: Thursday, November 17, 4 – 6 p.m., at Rhode Island College, Building #6 (RIASP conference room), 600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Providence.

11. RIDE provides revised versions of evaluation forms

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

In response to feedback from the field, RIDE has revised the Classroom Observation Feedback Form and the Mid-Year Conference Form. Additionally, RIDE has provided Word versions of all the evaluation forms in order to address technical difficulties with the PDF forms. The evaluation forms can be found at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/Guides.aspx>.

12. SurveyWorks initial reports posted on InfoWorks page of RIDE Web site

Please see this notice from our Office of Data, Analysis, and Research:

Initial results from the last spring's SurveyWorks surveys are now available and were posted today on InfoWorks:

<http://infoworks.ride.ri.gov/>.

These initial results are in PDF format only. Over the next few weeks, we will integrate some of the data from SurveyWorks into the InfoWorks school and district reports, so that educators and the public can access the data more readily. At this time, we are not making any public announcement about the initial release of this survey data. When we integrate the data into the InfoWorks reports and develop a statewide SurveyWorks report, we plan to issue a news release, and we will inform you in advance about this release.

To find the initial results for your schools, first search for a school by using the "School Finder" and then click on the grey SurveyWorks bar part-way down the page.

School reports are organized into three sections by survey population: Students, Parents, and Teachers. Each section includes subsections related to various elements of the Basic Education Program, including: Teaching and Student Achievement, Families and Communities, Safe and Supportive Schools, and Funding and Resources. The findings are reported in tables showing the total number and percent of individuals answering each item by school and at the state level. School-level parent or teacher results are not included where response rates were too low to produce reliable data.

To protect confidentiality, results from the school-administrator survey have been aggregated into groups of LEAs: Urban, Urban Ring, Suburban, and State-Operated and Charter LEAs. These reports can be found at:

<http://iwl.provplan.org/safe-and-supportive/statewide-data>.

Next year's administration will begin in January for the student and parent surveys and in February for the teacher and administrator surveys. We are working with our survey vendor to streamline the survey instruments and to improve the protocols to attain increased participation rates. More information on the 2012 surveys will be coming soon. If you have any questions about the survey results or about next year's survey administration, please contact Jan Mermin, at 222-4710 or jan.mermin@ride.ri.gov. Thank you for your help making the survey a success.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>